

Hybrid Termites Are Now Confirmed in Florida

UF research confirms hybrid termites exist in just one Florida county, while the termites actually damaging Northeast Florida homes keep spreading.

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Hybrid termites make headlines. Native subterranean termites make holes in your house. Only one of those is a real risk in Flagler County.”

*Brandon Micalizzi, Owner,
Unity Pest & Wildlife*

researchers have confirmed that hybrid termites exist in the state, the offspring of two invasive species that can interbreed where their ranges overlap. National news outlets have run with the story for months under the label "super termites."

The university's findings, published by its Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences as "Hybrid Coptotermes Termites: Separating Fact from Fiction," are considerably less dramatic than the coverage. Confirmed hybrid colonies have been identified in only one Florida county,

Broward, where they account for less than 1% of termite swarms collected. They consume wood at rates comparable to their parent species. They cannot be identified without laboratory testing. And researchers found they do not change treatment recommendations — the professional products already in use remain effective on them.

[Unity Pest & Wildlife](#), a licensed pest control company serving Flagler and St. Johns counties, says that last point is the one homeowners should take away.

"Nobody in Palm Coast needs to lose sleep over a hybrid in Broward County," said Brandon Micalizzi, owner of Unity Pest & Wildlife. "The termites that are actually taking houses apart here are the typical species, and they've been doing it the whole time. The question worth asking isn't what species is consuming your home, It's whether or not you have an active termite warranty."

WHAT A HOMEOWNER CAN DO WITHOUT CALLING ANYONE

A [fair amount of termite defense is maintenance](#), and it costs nothing.

Termites need moisture. Pull mulch, soil and stacked firewood back from the foundation and siding. Repair leaking spigots, gutters and AC condensate lines that keep the ground damp against the structure. Eliminate wood-to-ground contact wherever it exists — deck posts, fence rails, buried scrap lumber. Keep crawlspaces ventilated.

Then learn the warning signs and check for them twice a year: mud tubes running up foundation walls and piers, discarded swarmer wings collecting on windowsills, frass that looks like coarse sawdust, hollow-sounding or blistering wood, and doors and windows that suddenly stick.

There is also a narrow band of genuine do-it-yourself treatment. Orange oil kills drywood termites on direct contact and works for a small, isolated drywood colony in one accessible piece of wood — a single baseboard section, window frame or trim piece. Termiticide foam, sold in \$20 to \$60 aerosol cans, can fill a single wall cavity where activity has been pinpointed through frass or a kick-out hole.

Outside of that, the retail aisle disappoints. Perimeter sprays do not reach the colony and wash out under the four-plus inches of rain a typical Florida summer month delivers. Consumer bait kits ship with four to six stations, which leaves half a foundation unmonitored; a correct install runs 10 to 20 stations spaced 10 feet apart. And none of it touches subterranean termites, which live in the soil around the foundation rather than in the wood itself. A homeowner can spend \$200 to \$400 on DIY products and get close to zero effect on the species.

WHEN IT STOPS BEING A DIY JOB

Every mud tube, every swarm and every suspicion of subterranean activity is a professional job from the first day, Unity says — and the reason is timing.

"One visible mud tube almost always means a colony has been active for six months or more," the company advises homeowners. Knocking that tube down does not solve anything; the colony detects the disturbance and simply reroutes through another foraging path, which is why an infestation can appear to go away and come back worse.

"Most homeowners who try DIY termite work end up with a false sense of security, more damage than they started with, and a bigger bill when they finally call a pro," Micalizzi said.

The bill is the part worth understanding. Treated the same week activity appears, the work runs \$800 to \$2,800. Let it sit a year and early repairs run \$3,500 to \$7,500. By year two, multi-area structural work reaches \$12,000 to \$25,000. Past year three, subfloor and joist failure runs \$30,000 to \$60,000 and up. Insect damage is a standard exclusion in Florida homeowners policies, so none of that is covered.

HOW UNITY PEST & WILDLIFE HELPS

Unity provides [professional termite control](#) in Palm Coast and St. Augustine using two approaches matched to the property. Termidor, a non-repellent liquid soil barrier, goes in undetected — termites walk through the treated zone, pick up the active ingredient and carry it back through the colony by contact, with documented effectiveness of 10 or more years. Trelona

in-ground bait stations take the slower route, interrupting the molting process until the colony collapses, with ongoing monitoring built in.

Every treatment carries a renewable annual bond: a free yearly inspection, no-charge re-treatment if activity returns, and transfer to the next owner at no cost when the home sells.

Homeowners who see any two warning signs, or who simply have not had the house looked at in over a year, can schedule a termite inspection with Unity directly. The company also handles residential pest control, wildlife removal, and lawn and palm care across the same service area.

"Do the maintenance, learn the five signs, and call somebody once a year," Micalizzi said. "That's the whole strategy. It has nothing to do with hybrids and it works on every termite in this state."

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